CLAIM AMENDMENTS:

Please amend the claims in the subject patent application as follows:

1. (currently amended) A rubber composition comprising: (1) a rubbery polymer; (2) from 1 to 30 parts per hundred parts of rubber by weight of pre-crosslinked polymer particles, wherein the pre-crosslinked polymer particles have a mean particle size as determined by light scattering which is within the range of 30 nm to 500 nm, wherein the pre-crosslinked polymer is comprised of repeat units that are derived from at least one monomer selected from the group consisting of acrylate monomers, acrylonitrile monomers, and vinyl halide monomers, wherein the pre-crosslinked polymer is in the form of core-shell particles having a core and a shell; and wherein the pre-crosslinked polymer has a glass transition temperature which is within the range of 30°C to 200°C; and (3) 10 to 150 parts per hundred parts of rubber by weight of a filler selected from the group consisting of carbon black and silica.

2. (original) A rubber composition as specified in claim 1 wherein the pre-crosslinked polymer is further comprised of repeat units that are derived from a crosslinking monomer.

3. (original) A rubber composition as specified in claim 2 wherein the crosslinking monomer is incorporated into the pre-crosslinked polymer at a level which is within the range of 1 weight percent to 30 weight percent, based upon the total monomers incorporated into the pre-crosslinked polymer.

4. (previously presented) A rubber composition as specified in claim 3 wherein the pre-crosslinked polymer is present in the rubber composition at a level which is within the range of 2 to 20 parts per hundred parts of rubber by weight.

5. (previously presented) A rubber composition as specified in claim 3 wherein the pre-crosslinked polymer is present in the rubber composition at a level which is

within the range of 4 to 15 parts per hundred parts of rubber by weight.

6. (currently amended) A rubber composition as specified in claim 4 wherein the pre-crosslinked polymer is in the form of particles having a mean particle size as determined by light scattering which is within the range of 40 nm to 250 nm.

7. (currently amended) A rubber composition as specified in claim 5 wherein the pre-crosslinked polymer is in the form of particles having a mean particle size as determined by light scattering which is within the range of 100 nm to 200 nm; and wherein the monomer is acrylonitrile.

8. (canceled)

9. (canceled)

10. (currently amended) A rubber composition as specified in ~~claim 8~~ claim 1 wherein the pre-crosslinked polymer is in the form of particles that are essentially spherical in shape; and wherein the pre-crosslinked polymer is further comprised of repeat units that are derived from a conjugated diolefin monomer.

11. (original) A rubber composition as specified in claim 1 wherein the monomer is an acrylate monomer.

12. (canceled)

13. (original) A rubber composition as specified in claim 1 wherein the monomer is a vinyl halide monomer.

14. (canceled)

15. (original) A rubber composition as specified in claim 2 wherein the crosslinking monomer is selected from the group consisting of divinyl benzene and ethylene glycol dimethacrylate.

16. (canceled)

17. (previously presented) A rubber composition as specified in claim 1 wherein the polymer in the core is crosslinked.

18. (previously presented) A rubber composition as specified in claim 1 wherein the polymer in the shell is crosslinked.

19. (original) A rubber composition as specified in claim 11 wherein the acrylate monomer is methyl methacrylate.

20. (canceled)

21. (previously presented) A rubber composition as specified in claim 1 wherein the filler is silica, and wherein the rubber composition is further comprised of a silica coupling agent.